

Information regarding VLOG-Certification of Laying Hen Rearing Operations

As of 30th December 2019

1. Minimum Feeding Conversion Period and Purchase of Additional Animals

Under the VLOG Standard¹, the feeding of laying hens must be “ohne Gentechnik” compliant² **for at least six weeks** before eggs can be marketed as “VLOG” or with the “Ohne GenTechnik” seal. This minimum feeding conversion period is based on the German EC Genetic Engineering Implementation Act (EGGenTDurchfG) but applies internationally to all “VLOG” production sites.

This six-week period often begins at the pullet rearing operation and can be counted by the laying hen operation. **Laying hen rearing operations will be subject to certification** if “ohne Gentechnik” compliant feeding at the pullet rearing operation is to be credited. Compliant pullet rearing operations will then need their own VLOG certifications.

For VLOG-certified pullet rearing operations, an informal feeding **certificate** is sufficient for crediting. The certificate must clearly state which animals/groups of animals are involved and from which date their feeding has been “ohne Gentechnik” compliant. This certificate can be based on Annex II of the VLOG Standard. The laying hen operation shall request the VLOG certificate from the pullet rearing operation at the time of purchase or once per year.

Example 1: The laying hen operation feeds the hens in an “ohne Gentechnik” compliant manner for six weeks or longer before the eggs are marketed as “VLOG”. Since feeding by the pullet rearing operation will not be credited, the latter need not be certified.

Example 2: A VLOG-certified rearing operation feeds a group of pullets in an “ohne Gentechnik” compliant manner for four weeks before selling them to the laying hen operation. Therefore, the laying hen operation must only feed the animals in an “ohne Gentechnik” compliant manner for two additional weeks before the eggs attain VLOG status – provided an appropriate certificate is submitted.

Example 3: The VLOG-certified rearing operation feeds the pullets in an “ohne Gentechnik” compliant manner for six or more weeks. The pullet rearing operation can label the animals as “VLOG” on the shipping documents, and the laying hen operation can market the eggs as “VLOG” from day one.

2. VLOG Requirements for Rearing Operations

The prerequisite for certification is compliance with the requirements of the VLOG Standard. The following parts are of particular relevance to laying hen rearing operations:

- A – General: This part introduces the VLOG system and describes the certification procedure.
- E – Agriculture: This part details the specific requirements for agricultural operations, such as feeding, purchase of additional animals and frequency of analysis.
- F – Agricultural Group Organisation: If group certification is sought, the requirements of Part F must be followed in addition to Part E.

¹ <https://www.ohnegentechnik.org/ohne-gentechnik-siegel/standard00/> (Subitem: VLOG Standard)

² “Ohne Gentechnik” compliant feeding = feeding without feeds that require labelling under EU Regulations 1829/2003 and 1830/2003 or that would need to be labelled if they were placed on the market.

J – Requirements for Laboratories and Tests: This part details the relevant requirements for laboratories and testing procedures for any necessary analyses. VLOG analyses may only be conducted by VLOG-recognised laboratories.

Moreover, the aforementioned parts refer to the various annexes to the Standard, which are also relevant.

3. Certification Process

A. Individual certification

An individual certification is the certification of a legally independent business with one or more affiliated sites.

The following steps are necessary for individual certification (see Chapter A 3):

1. Enter into a **Standard Usage Agreement with VLOG**. The Agreement can be found at: <https://www.ohnegentechnik.org/ohne-gentechnik-siegel/standard00/> (Subitem: Standard Usage Agreement).
Fill out two copies of the Agreement and the attached master data sheet and send both signed copies to VLOG. One copy will be signed and returned to the business by VLOG. This process will also include assignment of the VLOG ID that is necessary for the issuance of the certificate. The processing time for Standard Usage Agreements is currently about three to four weeks.
2. Sign a **contract with a VLOG-recognised certification body**. The list of recognised certification bodies can be found at: <https://www.ohnegentechnik.org/zertifizierer/>
3. Set an **audit date** with the certification body.
4. An on-site **audit** will be conducted at the operation and all associated sites, which are to be included in the VLOG certification.
5. When the audit has been passed and the VLOG ID has been received, the certification body will issue a **VLOG certificate**, which will be valid until the end of the following year.
6. To renew the certification, there must be a successful **follow-up audit** of the operation before the certification expires.

B. Agricultural group certification

With a group certification, several associated agricultural operations are combined into one VLOG group. There is a **group organiser**, to which the VLOG certificate is issued, and several legally independent **group members** (each with one or more sites). The group organiser undertakes various tasks for the group members – for further details, see Part F of the VLOG Standard, Version 19.01.

The following steps are necessary to certify a group (see Chapter A 3, F 2.2 and F 2.3 of the VLOG Standard):

1. The group organiser enters into a **Standard Usage Agreement with VLOG**, which can be found at: <https://www.ohnegentechnik.org/ohne-gentechnik-siegel/standard00/> (Subitem: Standard Usage Agreement).
Fill out two copies of the Agreement and the attached master data sheet and send both signed copies to VLOG. One copy will be signed and returned to the group organiser by VLOG. This process will also include assignment of the VLOG ID that is necessary for the issuance of the certificate. The processing time for Standard Usage Agreements is currently about three to four weeks. No Standard Usage Agreement is necessary for the individual operations.

2. The group organiser signs a **contract** with a VLOG-recognised certification body. The list of recognised certification bodies can be found at:
<https://www.ohne Gentechnik.org/zertifizierer/>
3. The group organiser and the group members set **audit dates** with the certification body.
4. If necessary, the group organiser engages in **self-monitoring** of all group members (see Chapter F 2.2.2).
5. The certification body conducts **on-site audits** of the group organiser and the group members (share, see Chapter F 2.2) at the associated sites, which are to be included in the VLOG certification.
6. When the audit has been passed and the VLOG ID has been received, the certification body will issue a **VLOG certificate**, which shall be valid until the end of the following year.
7. To renew the certification, there must be a successful **follow-up audit** of the group organiser before the certification expires. The group members must be audited in accordance with their audit intervals (see Chapter F 2.3) in order to remain in the group.

4. Standards Recognised as Equivalent

A listing of the certifications standards, which VLOG recognises as equivalent can be found at <https://www.ohne Gentechnik.org/ohne-gentechnik-siegel/standard00/> (Subitem: Additional documents/information sheets). Pullets that are certified under an appropriate standard do not need an additional VLOG certification. Notification of the relevant certificate (and any additional requirements listed in the document), and the appropriate labels on the shipping documents are sufficient in this case.

5. Additional Information for Rearing Operations

If the certification status of “VLOG” animals remains unchanged, it is necessary to comply with any VLOG certification duty for **cattle dealers or transporters**, if they are used. Chapter E 1 of the VLOG Standard specifies which activities are subject to certification.

Please contact us if you have questions or require further assistance.

General questions regarding the certification process and agreements

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Specific questions regarding the VLOG

Standard in agriculture and group certification

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